

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-12

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 EUR-25 IO-14 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00

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PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20 USIA-15 ACDA-19 OMB-01 TRSE-00

SCEM-02 SCI-06 DRC-01 /168 W
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R 151250Z NOV 73

FM USINT CAIRO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4343

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 CAIRO 3531

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT PFOR EG IS

SUBJECT: SITUATION IN EGYPT, NOVEMBER 15

1. SUMMARY: ONE WEEK AFTER DEPARTURE OF SECRETARY, THERE HAS BEEN APPARENT BREAKTHROUGH ON DETAILS OF IMPLEMENTATION OF SIX-POINT CEASEFIRE ACCORD BETWEEN EGYPT AND ISRAEL. THIS HAS SOMEWHAT IMPROVED A MOOD OF INCREASING PESSIMISM ABOUT WHETHER ANY AGREEMENT COULD BE REACHED WITH ISRAEL, BUT THE PROCESS HAS LEFT A RESIDUE OF DISTRUST AND SKEPTICISM. MOST EGYPTIANS BELIEVE THAT PROGRESS TOWARD A SETTLEMENT WILL BE ACHIEVED, BUT AT GREAT EFFORT AND ONLY WITH US SUPPORT IN INFLUENCING ISRAEL TO ABIDE BY COMMITMENTS, A POINT WHICH GOE APPEARS INTERESTED IN PUBLICLY UNDERSCORING.

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IN CONVERSATIONS WITH AMBASSADOR EILTS, FOREIGN AMBAS-

SADORS IN CAIRO HAVE EMPHASIZED SENSE OF URGENCY WHICH EGYPTIANS ATTACH TO SETTLEMENT PROCESS. FINALLY, DESPITE REPORTS OF RESTIVENESS AGAINST THE CEASEFIRE, SADAT APPEARS TO BE IN CONTROL OF A NATIONAL POLICY AIMED, FOR THE MOMENT, AT A POLITICAL RESOLUTION OF THE CONFLICT. END SUMMARY.

2. AN UNEVEN WEEK HAS PASSED SINCE THE DEPARTURE OF THE SECRETARY. INITIAL OPTIMISM OF MANY EGYPTIANS FOLLOWING SECRETARY'S DISCUSSIONS AND ANNOUNCEMENT OF ELEVATION OF US/EGYPTIAN RELATIONSHIP, REINFORCED BY RELIEF THAT MOMENTUM TOWARD RESUMPTION OF HOSTILITIES HAD BEEN BROKEN, GAVE WAY OVER NOVEMBER 10/11 WEEKEND TO INCREASED CAUTION ABOUT SPECIFIC RESULTS OF KISSINGER VISIT. PART OF THIS WAS DUE TO DELAYS IN SIGNING OF CEASEFIRE ACCORD; PART ALSO TO AN INCREASING FEELING AMONG SOME EGYPTIANS THAT IN CALLING FOR TALKS TOWARD IDF RETURN TO OCTOBER 22 LINES AND NOT FOR RETURN ITSELF, ACCORD WAS NOT TO EGYPT'S ADVANTAGE; AND PART TO A SOBERER VIEW OF HOW LONG A POLITICAL PROCESS WOULD TAKE. HEYKAL MADE HIS OWN CONTRIBUTION BY QUOTING THE SECRETARY AS ALLEGEDLY SAYING THAT SIX MONTHS TO A YEAR WOULD BE NECESSARY FOR EGYPT TO SEE "THE BEGINNING OF SOMETHING REASONABLE." THIS SOBERER OUTLOOK TURNED DARKER AS DELAYS OVER IMPLEMENTATION OF ACCORD, ALTERCATIONS BETWEEN UNEF AND IDF, AND APPARENT ISRAELI OBSTRUCTIONISM INCREASED SUSPICIONS THAT ISRAEL WAS NOT GOING TO ACT CONSTRUCTIVELY EXCEPT UNDER DURESS. MRS. MEIR'S STATEMENT THAT THERE WOULD BE NO IDF WITHDRAWAL TO THE OCTOBER 22 LINES MARKED A PARTICULAR LOW; AND BY TUESDAY AFTERNOON EGYPTIAN WRITERS WERE BEGINNING TO PEN ARTICLES THREATENING DIRE ACTION UNLESS THE ACCORD WERE IMPLEMENTED QUICKLY. THIS PARTICULAR POINT, THE NEED BY EGYPT FOR QUICK ACTION ON ACCORD AND ON ENSUING SETTLEMENT PROCESS HAS, NOT UNEXPECTEDLY, BEEN EMPHASIZED BY FOREIGN AMBASSADORS IN TALKS WITH AMBASSADOR EILTS DURING PAST FEW DAY.

3. AGREEMENT ON SPECIFICS OF ACCORD REACHED AT KM.
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101 ON WEDNESDAY HAS LIFTED THIS MOOD SOMEWHAT. NOVEMBER 15 CAIRO PRESS NOTES WITH SOME SATISFACTION THAT ISRAELI CHECKPOINTS ON CAIRO/SUEZ ROAD ARE TO BE TURNED OVER TO UN CONTROL, AND INDIVIDUAL EGYPTIANS HAVE EXPRESSED AN INCREASED DEGREE OPTIMISM ABOUT THE NEAR FUTURE. NEVERTHELESS, A RESIDUE OF DISTRUST AND SKEPTICISM HAS BEEN LEFT AS A RESULT OF THE SEEMINGLY TORTUROUS PROCESS OF EXTRACTING FROM ISRAEL THE SIMPLEST

AGREEMENT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ACCORD. IT NOW APPEARS CLEAR TO MANY EGYPTIANS THAT PROGRESS WILL BE MADE ONLY AT THE EXPENSE OF FURTHER DELAY AND ALTER-CATION, AND ONLY BY THE EXERTION OF INTENSE PRESSURE ON ISRAEL. THE MOST OBVIOUS SOURCE OF THIS PRESSURE IS THE US, AND IT IS NOTEWORTHY IN THIS REGARD THAT THE GOE HAS CHOSEN THE COURSE OF PUBLICIZING THE FACT (IF NOT THE CONTENT) OF MEETINGS BETWEEN FOREIGN MINISTER FAHMY AND AMBASSADOR, AS IF TO SHOW THAT SUCCESSES ATTAINED THUS FAR ARE THE RESULT OF US/GOE INTERACTION. A BEIRUT PRESS REPORT, PUBLISHED IN GUMHURIYYA NOVEMBER 15, TO THE EFFECT THAT FAHMY WARNED AMBASSADOR OF MORE HOSTILITIES UNLESS THE US FORCED ISRAEL TO CARRY OUT ITS OBLIGATIONS, WOULD SEEM TO BE PART OF THIS PUBLICITY. CERTAINLY IT DOES THE GOE NO HARM TO HAVE SUCH REPORTS BELIEVED. ANOTHER FACTOR IN THE GOE'S VIEW OF ITS RELATIONSHIP WITH THE US IS A GROWING BELIEF THAT THE OIL WEAPON IS BEGINNING TO HAVE ITS EFFECT ON THE US POLICY PROCESS--OR, MORE SIMPLY PUT, IS BEGINNING TO HURT.

4. DESPITE AN INCREMENTAL INCREASE IN OPTIMISM, THERE ARE IDENTIFIABLE AREAS OF RESISTANCE TO SADAT'S CURRENT POLICY OF ATTEMPTING A COURSE OF POLITICAL ACTION. ONE OF THESE IS IN THE ARMED FORCES WHERE, REPORTEDLY, SOME YOUNGER OFFICERS CONTINUE TO RANKLE AT A CEASEFIRE

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C O N F I D E N T I A L FINAL SECTION OF 2 CAIRO 3531

WHICH WAS IMPOSED FOR POLITICAL REASONS AND NOT (THEY BELIEVE) BECAUSE OF MILITARY REALITIES, AND WHICH WAS IMMEDIATELY BROKEN BY THE ISRAELIS FOR FURTHER GAINS. ANOTHER GROUP APPEARS TO BE AMONG UNIVERSITY-AGE STUDENTS. A WEEK AGO IT WAS UNDERSTOOD WITH UNIVERSITY CIRCLES THAT EGYPTIAN UNIVERSITIES WOULD RE-OPEN ON NOVEMBER 17. THIS DATE HAS NOW REPORTEDLY BEEN POSTPONED; THE REASON IS THE APPEARANCE IN CAIRO ON NOVEMBER 13 OF PAMPHLETS DENOUNCING THE CEASEFIRE AS TREACHERY. FURTHER INFORMATION IS NOT AVAILABLE, BUT IT APPEARS THAT GOE SECURITY AUTHORITIES STILL POSE A THREAT TO INTERNAL STABILITY.

5. WITH THESE EXCEPTIONS, IT NEVERTHELESS APPEARS THAT SADAT'S POPULARITY IS HIGH AND THAT, WHATEVER THE CONFIDENTIAL

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LEVEL OF DISCONTENT WITH HIS INACTION PRIOR TO OCTOBER 6, THE WAR HAS BEEN HIS REDEMPTION. EGYPTIAN STATE THAT THEY SEE NO TRUE CHALLENGE TO HIS LEADERSHIP WITHIN OR WITHOUT THE ESTABLISHMENT; AND THEY APPEAR AS WILLING TO FOLLOW HIM ON THE PATH OF DIPLOMACY AS THEY DID ON THE PATH OF FIGHTING.

6. AT THE MOMENT, SADAT IS ENGAGED IN A CONSPICUOUS FLURRY OF POLITICAL ACTIVITY IN PREPARATION FOR POST-ACCORD DIPLOMACY. IN THE PAST FOUR DAYS HE HAS MET WITH ARAFAT; TUNKU ABDEL RAHMAN; SAUDI FOREIGN MINISTER SAQQAF AND PETROLEUM MINISTER YAMANI; THE FOREIGN MINISTER OF ETHIOPIA; EX-ROMANIAN FOREIGN MINISTER MANESCU; AND HE IS SCHEDULED TO MEET WITH SYRIAN FOREIGN MINISTER KHADDAM. OTHER FOREIGN VIPS ARE IN CAIRO, THE LATEST ARRIVALS BEING THE MOROCCAN FOREIGN MINISTER, A MEMBER OF THE SOMALI RCC, AND FRENCH GENERAL BEAUFFRE. SAYYID MAR'I HAS LEFT FOR KHARTOUM, AND ASHRAF MARWAN RETURNS NOVEMBER 15 FROM A BRIEF MISSION TO THE GULF. THE INTENSITY OF THE ACTIVITY WOULD BE QUITE INCREDIBLE WERE IT NOT FOR THE BRIEF TIME BEFORE

THE ARICAN FOREIGN MINISTERS MEETING (NOVEMBER 19),
AND THE ARAB FOREIGN MINISTERS CONFERENCE AND ARAB
SUMMIT, BOTH NOW SCHEDULED TO BE HELD IN ALGIERS ON
NOVEMBER 24 AND 26TH RESPECTIVELY.
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